

Movie Makers

March—April, 2002

Volume 12 No. 2

The American Motion Picture Society

Sponsors of the oldest continuing Film/video Festival in the world.

Light the Flame Within

Brian Gubler

Utah has just gone through the experience of a lifetime, as we collectively hosted the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. It was really neat, being the center of attention for 17 days. Now I'm experiencing post Olympics Withdrawal Symptoms.

I'm sure you will think I'm prejudiced, but this was the Best Winter Olympics---EVER. Especially for the good old USA. The highest medal count in previous Winter Olympics was 13, which they garnered on two occasions. This time around the USA Athletes earned 34 medals, 10 of them GOLD. How's that for GREAT!

The world saw the 2002 Winter Games up close and per-

sonal, courtesy of NBC. I'm sure most of you watched all or part of the action as it unfolded, before your very eyes, through the magic of television. But, unobserved by the viewing public was another major effort, a Cultural Olympiad, which played out in connection with the Winter Games. Its theme, Visions and Victories, Experiencing the Olympics Spirit through the Arts. In our local community, the Bountiful/Davis Art Center, with which we are affiliated, sponsored a two night extravaganza featuring Art and the Olympics on Friday the 1st of March and on Saturday the 2nd. The two programs were completely separate and featured children's singing and dancing groups, the reading of Olympic writing and poetry contest winners, a slide show and video presentations by the Utah Amateur Video Makers Club. Both programs were

videotaped, and copies provided to the Art Center as well.

The balance of this article will concern itself with the two Club Videos that were produced in support of Bountiful's Cultural Olympiad. The first video, produced by Ernest Smith, was titled "Children's Olympics Visions." Ernest interviewed 18 young children and asked them a series of questions concerning various aspects of the Olympics. The underlying idea was a spin off on Art Linkletter's old program, "Children say the Darndest Things." Once the three hours of tape were captured, the next task was to select the clips to be used in the production, which was to be 20 minutes long. The end of the video featured a three

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Movie Makers

Dedicated to the interests of the Serious Motion Picture Maker.

Vol. 12 March—April 2002
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MOVIE MAKERS is published bi-monthly on the 25th day of odd-numbered months by the AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY and features news and articles of interest to the serious motion picture maker, video or film.

Membership price per year is \$10.00, Canada \$12.00, foreign addresses \$13.00, all payable in U.S. funds or equivalent. Articles may be copied when the source is given. Back copies are available at .80 cents post paid.

George W. Cushman
Founder,
1909-1996

Matt Jenkins, Editor

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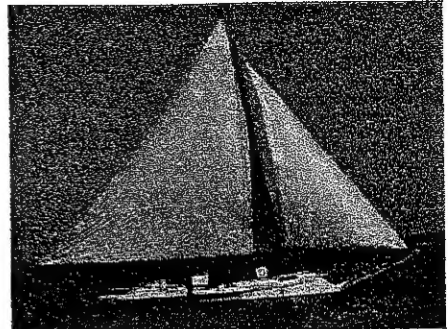
From the Editor

A MPS members may remember an article I wrote in the July-August 2000 issue of *Movie Makers* called *Why Did it Win? Why Did it Lose?* This article prompted the most responses I have ever received for a *Movie Makers* article. This spring I was planning a sequel to this article. Gloomily, it originally appeared that the title would be *Why Did it Lose? Why Did it Lose?* The documentary that I was going to discuss has been entered into 13 festivals and so far has been rejected from 6. Comments from two festivals have been received.

However, brighter skies seem to be prevailing. A favorable review is expected in the Spring, 2002 issue of *Video-scope* magazine. Also a review will be published in the March issue of *Shock Cinema*. So, after the reviews are out, I plan to write an analysis of comments and perhaps call the article *Why is it Liked? Why is it not Liked?* Or, perhaps title should be *Why do Critics Like it and not Judges?*

My fictional movie has stalled. It's just that I am so involved with documentary production. I have too many stories to tell. By the time readers receive this issue, I will have returned from a trip to the Chesapeake Bay where I taped a documentary

aboard a hundred year old oyster dredging boat called a skipjack. This trip promises to be exciting and cold!



Since I am flying, I plan to carry a Sony mini DV-Cam camera with an external microphone. That, plus tapes, extra batteries and a battery charger is all I plan to carry on the airplane. We'll see how easily I go through airport security.

I have arranged for a cheap fluid head tripod, and various reflectors to be at the shoot. I hope, using natural light and reflectors, to control the contrast and to have a quality picture.

I am also arranging to have historical photographs and maps provided for this documentary in an electronic form. It makes it easier to load into the AVID for editing purposes.

So the research stage is under way. The more I can find out about the skipjack, the better prepared I will be in the interview stage.

As always, you may e-mail your comments or question to me at mattj@cameron.edu.

DEAR AMPS

Recently a letter was forwarded to me from an eighth grade student who was writing a research paper on film directing. He asked a series of questions. I thought it would be interesting to answer his questions from a low/no budget perspective. My responses are italicized.

How hard is it to make a movie now compared to back in the 60's?

I don't know I was just a baby then.

How tough is it to be a director and what's life like being photographed wherever you go?

As long as you plan for a production, it is fun being a director. As for those photographers taking pictures everywhere, they are just horrible!

Do directors use fake props or real props?

It depends, how much money do we have?

When you use animals, how long does it take to finish the scene that they are in?

I subscribe to the philosophy: Never work with animals or children.

Also, have the actors or actresses ever complained that they are there?

I would be pleased to have them complain, its having them show up in the first

place that is troublesome!

When a studio makes a big hit does the director and actors just put their soul into the movie or does the crowd just want to see it because of the title?

I would hope that the director and the actors put their "soul" into the production because they believe in the project. However, I suspect that people go to the movies because of the actors in them, or the director, or the storyline.

How were they able to get a huge boat like the Titanic on set or did they use something else? If it was, how did they get it to stand on end with people falling off it into the water below?

I believe that director James Cameron built an almost full sized model of the Titanic and set it in a huge water tank. The model was built in two sections and the stern was designed with a hydraulic lift that was able to tilt the stern up as the ship sank. Actors were tied to long bungee cords and slid down the stern and actually bounced back so they were unharmed. Then, using computers, Cameron cleaned up the shots. (Actually this is pretty much true!)

When a movie uses a castle have they ever used a fake one?

It depends, how much money do we have?

With movies that have an ex-

plosion that can be shot only one time has the actor that ever did that fail?

I can't think of any specific instances but there have been lots of mistakes and problems on sets.

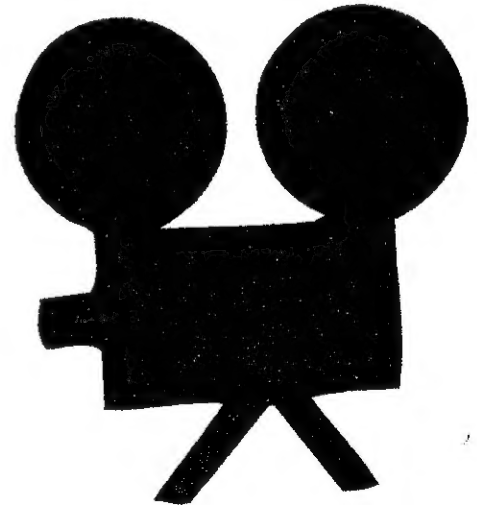
When you finish a movie how do you feel?

I think, now what do I do with it?

Have you ever cried in one of your own movies?

No, but I fell off the staging at a production once!

Someone else actually responded to this student's questions. I'm sure those responses were more serious than mine.



Choices for Computer Editing

Darold Wilson

The choices and prices of equipment and editing programs have never been better for those that want to do computer editing of their videos. And some of the simpler programs are quite easy to use.

I found Adobe Premier a little intimidating but am sure I would do fine with it if I spent more time learning all of its features. I decided recently to try a simpler program and recently bought Pinnacle Systems Studio 7. The price is \$99 but I found it on sale for \$59. Since I have a Digital 8 Camcorder, I had to spend another \$40 to get a fire wire card for my computer, which provides the connections for video. Those who don't have a digital camcorder would need to buy a video digitizing card instead of a firewire card.

When I opened the box that has the fire-wire card I found that Ulead's Video Studio 4, another entry level editing program, was included. So I could have started computer editing for \$40.

I already had a second hard

drive installed in my computer for storing video. However, suitable 40 gigabyte hard drives can now be purchased for less than \$100 and that is large enough to hold nearly three hours of DV video.

It is recommended that the computer speed be a minimum of 300 MHz, and most computers that are less than three years old will be suitable.

After connecting the single firewire cable from the camcorder to the computer and loading the original video-tape into my computer I was ready to begin the editing process. Studio 7 provides three but-



tons across the top of the computer display for Capture, Editing, and Make Movie.

Clicking the Capture button starts the process of capturing video into the computer. As the video is captured a thumbnail size picture from the start of each video clip is deposited into a photo album at the upper left corner of the

screen.

I then clicked the Edit button to begin the edit process. I then positioned the mouse over the scene in the album that I wanted for the start of my video, clicked the mouse to highlight the thumbnail, and then dragged it down to the timeline in the center of the computer display. This process was repeated for additional scenes. By clicking the play button below the three-inch viewer window in the upper right corner of the screen I was able to view the assembled video. I changed the position of some of the scenes by highlighting the scenes and dragging them to a new position.

I then loaded a new tape into the camcorder, clicked the Make Movie button, and the edited video was transferred to the camcorder.

I was surprised at some of the advanced features provided in Studio 7. It provides for separate music and commentary audio tracks in addition to the original sound and the capability to adjust the relative sound levels. It provides for adjusting the color, brightness, and contrast of individual video clips, and for speeding up or slowing down video clips. It provides a good variety of transitions such as fades, dissolve, wipes, and page turns.

(Continued from page 1)

minute sequence on the arrival of the Olympic Torch at Bountiful, at 5:30 in the morning on opening day, 8 February 2002, to a cheering throng of 12,000, during a vigorous early morning snow storm.

In addition to Ernest and to the Children, David McNeill and Brian Gubler helped with the production. It was enthusiastically received by the assembled audience and provided a good dose of humor that the rest of the program lacked. We got many positive compliments on this movie after its screening.

The second video, produced by our Club President, Jean Frances, was titled, "The Olympic Spirit." Jean and her husband, Mike Treshow, were Olympic Volunteers and worked in the Olympic Village, where the athletes stayed during the games. So, they were right in the heart of much of the action and Jean was able to get some very unique footage. Additionally, several other club members filmed clips that were incorporated in the 14 minute Olympic Spirit film. Five tribes of Native Americans were featured in the Olympics Opening Ceremonies, and one of the participants in the touching ceremonies was featured in the video, as the thread of her involvement was woven through the tapestry of the movie. Like the film, "Children's Olympics Vi-

sions," the Club Film, "The Olympics Spirit," was an instant hit and we received a lot of very upbeat comments about it at the conclusion of the program.

Members of The Club were totally immersed in the production of the two films, which were very important to the success of the Bountiful Cultural Olympiad and the overall effort to Experience the Olympic Spirit through the Arts. Many hours were spent by various club members over the span of several months, and this involvement brought a feeling of ownership to Club Members. And in so doing, these games became OUR Olympic Games and we LOVED them. We hope you enjoyed them as well.

A Couple of Tips

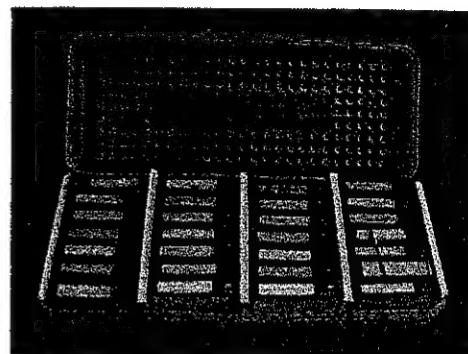
Roger Garretson

Like so many of you that use the Mini DV format, I have had a problem storing the tapes in a reasonable manner. The small boxes that the tapes come in seem to get scattered throughout my storage cabinet.

While shopping at a local Staples stationery store, I noticed a plastic "pencil" box that looked like it might work for this purpose. It is 13"w X 5"d X 2 1/2" h. The box can store

28 tapes but to keep the tapes in order, I cut small pieces of foam core to fit between the rows of tapes and voila, a storage box for less than \$3.00!

I recently purchased a short



shotgun mike and quickly found out that it picked up motor noise from my camcorder. The most reasonable mike holder that I found was in the neighborhood of \$50. Using an idea supplied by Lee Agnew, a member of our local video club, I purchased a 2 1/2" plastic pipe coupling, sawed slots in the end so that I could install stout rubber bands at right angles to each other. Rubber bands are used at both ends of the coupling. A small piece of aluminum was formed in to a shoe, attached to the coupling and for less than a dollar, a great microphone holder. Note: to install the mike in the holder, each of the rubber bands are crossed and the mike inserted between them.



B+ Movie Making

Matt Jenkins

Can't get enough talk about shooting amateur, low/no budget productions? There is a radio program you can listen to in order to find out more about these kinds of productions. However, you can't hear this program on a regular radio, you must surf the Internet to tune it in. The site is www.adrenalinradio.com

Adrenaline Radio is an Internet based radio network that claims to pick up where ordinary radio leaves off. It carries all sorts of programs covering such topics as soccer, gardening and low/no budget movie making.

On Wednesday nights from 7 to 8 PM Eastern time you can hear the B+ Movie Making Show with Les Sekely.

Les has an impressive resume. He has worked for such networks as ABC, Nickelodeon, and the Learning Channel. Also, he won a National ACE Award and an Emmy Award for writing/directing/co-producing, *Yes, This Is Comedy!*, a Mad TV-type sketch comedy show. Les also co-produced *Ama-*

zon Warrior and *Merchants Of Death* and starred in *Bloodstream* and *Vampire Night*.

On the Adrenaline site Les provides some tips for shooting a low-budget movie. Some tips are obvious. For example: "Write a good script." Others, such as: "Be multi-tasked" and "Don't shoot so many takes" should be obvious but are often overlooked in production.

It would be unfair to label Les as a low-budget cheerleader. While presenting a positive image, he does conduct research on his guests and he offers questions that indicate his depth of knowledge.

Definitely an advocate for low/no budget productions, listeners will enjoy hearing the guests that Les brings to Adrenaline Radio.



Visit the website at:

www.angelfire.com/movies/amps

The Contestants Speak

No 20 – September 1994

George Cushman

(For this issue we presented comments heard from contestants themselves since the early 60's.)

From the judges' score sheets sent to me I can tell not one judge got the story the way it was intended.

My sound track was recorded with the most expensive equipment money can buy, yet the judges criticized my sound.

I didn't agree with the judges until I went to the screenings. Now I see why my picture didn't win anything.

The judges used were said to be professionals, but they sure don't know the amateur's problems.

My latest film has placed in six big festivals, yet got nothing in this one. How come?

Of the five reports I got back, only one judge voted for my picture. I wish I could find out why the other judges rejected

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it.

The judge at our last contest was highly prejudiced. I don't think such a person should be asked to judge.

My friend and I each sent a film to a festival. Mine placed and his didn't. Two weeks later we sent the same two films to another festival. His placed and mine didn't. So goes the gamble.

I have finally learned effort doesn't count for much when I see a simple little film win over a monumental, time-consuming spectacular work. One never knows what a judge will fancy.

Travel films won all the awards this year. Next year I hope a more diverse selection of judges will be made.

I sent my film only to get the judge's score sheets. It was a

personal education to read their comments.

The judges must have confused my picture with another because none of their comments apply to what I submitted.

I never expected to win.



Upcoming Festivals

Close Date	Festival Name and address for forms	Open to:	Subject	Format	Time Limit	Entry Fee	Award	Show Dates
4/15/02	10 th Croatian Minute Movie Cup, GFR FILM-VIDEO, 34 000 Pozenga, p.p. 709, CROATIA (see also www.cmmc.cjb.net) Contact Roger Garretson < rgarretson@aol.com > for forms within the USA	A	Open	PAL only	1 minute Incl. Credits	none	See note 1 below	May 24-25, 2002
6/8/02	Cotswold Int'l Film & Video Festival 2002, c/o Lee Prescott, C.I.F.V.F., P.O BOX 64, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 2YH, England, UK Forms are available via the internet < www.cotswoldfilmvideofest.co.uk >	A,B,E	Open	HJMNO PQ in Pal M-Ntsc	20 Min-B 30 min-A	\$11 A \$7 B \$16 E	TU	Sept 13/14, 2002
5/22/02	Mississippi Valley Festival, obtain forms from Jerry Turk 12916 Autumn View Dr., St. Louis, MO 63146-4332 or < gwturk@swbell.net >	A	Open	M	20 Min	\$10/tape	V W	June 3/4
7/27/02	PSA, obtain forms from Jerry Turk 12916 Autumn View, , St. Louis, MO 63146-4332 or < gwturk@swbell.net >	A	Open	M	20 Min	\$10/tape	V W	Sept 3/7
8/31/02	73 rd American Int'l Film and Video Festival, 30 Kanan Rd, Oak Park, CA 91377 or on the web at www.angelfire.com/movies/amps	ABC	Open	HJMNO PQ	15 Min	\$10 xx 15 yy	V W	Oct 10-12 2002
N/A Not Announced or not available								
A Amateur B College Student C Hi Sch or Grade School	D Independent E Professional F Restricted	G Open	H S 8 J 16mm K Other L 3/4" M VHS	N SVHS O 8mmvid P Hi 8 Q MiniDV	R Regional S exceptions T Cash U Trophies	V Certificates W Other Award X Approximate Y It varies	xx Members yy Non Member zz	

Note 1 A special prize will be awarded for promoting solidarity between nations

See the best amateur movie making under the sun!

Plan to attend the convention of amateur movie makers 2002.

There will be four festivals, the AMMA International, Magic Moments, Ten Best of the West and AMPS American International.

There will also be lectures, demonstrations, panel discussions and networking with other amateur movie makers.

Plan to travel to San Diego, October 10-13, 2002!

Sponsored by the San Diego Amateur Movie Makers Club.

From:
American Motion Picture Society
30 Kanan Road
Oak Park, California
91377-1105

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY**

I Would like to Join the Society:

Dues USA: (includes - Movie Maker) \$ 10.00
Dues Canada: (includes. - Movie Maker) \$ 12.00
Dues-Foreign: (includes - Movie Maker) \$13.00

Enclosed _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Mail to: AMPS, 30 Kanan Rd., Oak Park, CA 91377-1105



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